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# Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 04600 291303Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 L-03 H-01 SS-15 TRSE-00
AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 INR-07 NSAE-00
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R 290836Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7730

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E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SHUM, RP, US
SUBJECT: SECRETARY ROMULO ON HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

REF: MANILA 374

1. DURING COURSE OF ADDRESS ENTITLED "THE WESTERN MASS MEDIA AND THE DISADVANTAGED COUNTIRES" BEFORE HONG KONG FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB MARCH 28, GENERAL ROMULO CITED PRESS TREATMENT OF DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT TO HIRC AS EXAMPLE OF BIASED WESTERN REPORTING. ROMULO CHARGED WIRE SERVICES WHICH HAD REPORTED STORY GAVE IMPRESSION DEPARTMENT ITSELF HAD CHOSEN PHILIPPINES AS ONE OF SIX COUNTRIES WHICH SYSTEMATICALLY VIOLATED HUMAN RIGHTS. ROMULO POINTED OUT PRESS DID NOT REPORT DEPARTMENT WAS COMPLYING WITH LAW PASSED BY CONGRESS AND THAT HIRC CHOSE THSE SIX "TARGETS FOR REASONS OF ITS OWN, OR AT THE BEHEST OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS PRODDED, ONE CAN IMAGINE, BY LOBBYISTS PURSUING THEIR OWN DARK INTERESTS."

2. ROMULO SAID FURTHER "IF THE REPORT ON THE PHILIPPINES IS READ CAREFULLY AND AS A WHOLE, IT WILL BE SEEN TO BE A REASONABLY FIAR, SOBER AND EMINENTLY FACTUAL REVIEW OF THE SO-CALLED HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES,
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WHICH IN EFFECT ACQUITS THE MARCOS ADMINISTRATION OF ANY SYSTEMATIC AND LARGE-SCALE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS." TO SUPPORT THIS CONTENTION, ROMULO THEN CITES VARIOUS PASSAGES FROM THE REPORT (ALBEIT SELECTIVELY), ESPECIALLY SECTIONS ON JUDICIAL PROCESSES, PRISONER TORTURE AND GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO PUNISH THOSE QUILTY OF DETAINEE MALTREATMENT.

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3. ON VEXED QUESTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, ROMULO NOTES THERE ARE WIDELY DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF POLITICAL PRISONER. HE SUGGESTS "ANGELA DAVIS, THE BERRIGAN BROTHERS, EVEN MARSHALL CINQ (SIC) AND THE KIDNAPPERS OF PATTY HEARST PROBABLY CONSIDER THEMSELVES POLITICAL PRISONERS." ROMULO THEN NOTES THAT DEPARTMENT ESTIMATED THAT "NUMBER OF DETAINEES WHO ARE NON-VIOLENT OPPONENTS OF MARTIAL LAW REGIME IS BELIEVED TO FALL IN THE LOWER PART OF THE RANGE OF ESTIMATES OR 500. HE AVOIDED GIVING UPPER LIMIT.

4. AFTER COMPLAINING OF PRESS' FAILURE TO REPORT MARCOS' ORDER TO RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS NOT FACING CRIMINAL CHARGES, ROMULO PROCEEDS TO ATTACK TIME ASIAN EDITION OF MARCH 17 FOR ONE SENTENCE DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT REGIME, "PRESIDENT MARCOS RULES BY DECREE, AND HAS BEEN ACCUSED BY BOTH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND THE US STATE DEPARTMENT OF TORTURING POLITICAL PRISONERS." ROMULO DOUBTS THAT "MORE CONCENTRATED MISREPRESENTATION AND MALICE COULD HAVE BEEN DISTILLED IN ONE SENTENCE." AFTER A LENGTHY RECITATION OF WHY THE SENTENCE IS UNFAIR, HE CONCLUDES TIME IS QUILTY OF SLANTED REPORTING.

5. COMMENT: ROMULO'S ASSESSMENT OF DEPARTMENT'S REPORT TO HIRC IS STRIKINGLY AT VARIANCE WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS' EMOTIONAL ASSESSMENT IN SPEECH TO UP LAW ALUMNI (SEE REFTEL). ROMULO'S MEASURED APPRAISAL OF DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS MAY REFLECT CONTINUING EMBASSY EFFORTS TO INFORM
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DFA ABOUT NATURE OF AND CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING REPORT. IT ALSO SUGGESTS THAT AFTER INITIAL IRRITATION, AT LEAST SOME WITHIN GOP GOT AROUND TO READING REPORT. IN ANY EVENT, ROMULO'S DECISION TO HIGHLIGHT REPORT IN MAJOR SPEECH OUTSIDE THE PHILIPPINES CONFIRMS TREND AWAY FROM MERELY IGNORING CRI-ICISM OF GOP HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IDENTIFIED IN MANILA 4279. FULL TEXT OF SPEECH BEING POUCHED EA/PHL.
SULLIVAN

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# Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** SHUM, RP, US, (ROMULO, CARLOS P)
**To:** STATE
**Type:** TE
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**Review Markings:**
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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009